

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Assessment and Accountability **NO.:** AAC 08-21
COMMITTEE DATE: June 13, 2008
BOARD DATE: June 25, 2008

**RENEWAL OF SPRINGFIELD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMONWEALTH HONORS PROGRAM**

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education accepts the report of the
Commonwealth Honors Program Executive Committee and renews the
membership of Springfield Technical Community College in the
Commonwealth Honors Program for six years, effective June 25, 2008.

Authority: Commonwealth Honors Program Approval Process Guidelines as
Revised by the Board of Higher Education in November 2006.

Contact: Francesca B. Purcell, Ph.D., Director for Academic Policy

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June 2008

Springfield Technical Community College

Renewal of Membership in Commonwealth Honors Program

Background

This motion concerns the continuation of Springfield Technical Community College's membership in the Commonwealth Honors Program (CHP). According to Commonwealth Honors Program Guidelines, once Commonwealth Honors Program approval has been obtained by an institution, the Program will be reviewed every six years by the Commonwealth Honors Executive Committee. The report of the Committee shall be forwarded to the Board of Higher Education for approval. This is the first renewal cycle for Springfield Technical Community College.

Review Process

Springfield Technical Community College prepared a self-study document presenting its Honors Program's structure and operations in terms of the Commonwealth Honors Program requirements. The report provided evidence documenting fulfillment of the following criteria:

1. Alignment of the mission and goals of the Honors Program with those of Springfield Technical Community College
2. Organization and administration
3. Admissions criteria
4. Transfer criteria
5. Program curriculum
6. Graduation criteria
7. Program resources
8. Approval procedures for new courses
9. Student enrollment for past three years
10. Approval procedures for new courses

Review Team Findings and Recommendations

On October 10, 2007, a review team (Susan McPherson, Associate Professor and Honors Program Coordinator, Quinsigamond Community College; Stephen Adams, Professor and Honors Program Chair, Westfield State College; and Cory Pols, Director of Advising, Commonwealth College, University of Massachusetts Amherst) appointed by the Commonwealth Honors Council, conducted the six-year review. Prior to the on-campus visit, the team reviewed the self-evaluation prepared by the College. The site visit was hosted and organized by Honors Program Coordinator David Winsper. The team also met with Vice President of Academic Affairs Steven Keller, Honors Committee members, faculty and students.

On the basis of the campus visit, the review of the self-evaluation, and the materials received during the on-campus visit, the team concluded that the Springfield Technical Community College Honors Program has developed and maintained the curriculum, resources, and administrative support integral for a Commonwealth Honors Program. The review team recommended to the Commonwealth Honors Executive Committee that it renew the membership of Springfield Technical Community in the Commonwealth Honors Program.

The reviewers noted three areas of concern: (1) creating a fully functional Honors Advisory Committee with student representation and a clearly defined charge, (2) clarifying graduation distinctions for honors program students, and (3) giving honors students full access to the honors lounge.

Institutional Response

STCC responded that the honors program coordinator will identify and recruit students to serve on the program advisory board and that the chief academic officer will investigate the possibility of designating the Honors Advisory Committee as a permanent sub-committee of the Academic Services Standing Committee. The review of the honors program graduation distinctions will be on the agenda of the next Honors Advisory Committee meeting. In addition, all viable options surrounding the provision of keys or access cards to the Honors Center to each honors student will be explored.

Springfield Technical Community College will provide a status report on its response at the spring 2009 Commonwealth Honors Council meeting.

Recommendation

Board of Higher Education staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation received from the CHP Executive Committee and recommends that the Board approve the renewal of the membership of Springfield Technical Community in the Commonwealth Honors Program.